

## ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Comparing Rates of Anxiety Symptoms in Adolescent Females with and without Autism

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Adolescent females experience substantially higher rates of the majority of anxiety disorder subtypes than do adolescent males. Evidence of the same gender differences might be expected in adolescent females with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). A sample of adolescent females with ASD were recruited from the local catchment area to complete the Personality Assessment Inventory-Adolescent (PAI-A). Matched female control subjects (i.e., not diagnosed with ASD) were obtained from the PAI-A clinical and community standardization samples. Analyses of score patterns on the anxiety and anxiety-related scales and subscales of the PAI-A were conducted between groups. Results yielded similarities in patterns between the ASD and clinical samples not found between the ASD and community samples. Evidence suggests adolescent females on the autism spectrum experience symptoms of anxious distress more closely aligned with those in clinical settings than those in the general community, supporting the existence of similar gender differences in anxiety rates in this population.